

## The plan

# BIKE STRONG IN FOUR WEEKS

THE TRAINING YOU NEED TO BLAST THE BIKE, WITHOUT LETTING YOUR SWIM AND RUN SLIDE

### Meet the expert

Phil Mosley

Mosley is our Coaching Editor, a multiple national triathlon age-group medallist and 2012 National Duathlon Champion

**FOR MANY TRIATHLETES, cycling is the discipline that holds the most untapped potential for improvement. During a triathlon you spend more time on the bike than you do running or swimming so it makes sense to devote plenty of time and effort into training. Cycling isn't limited by**

**injuries or muscle soreness like running is, or by technique and flexibility issues like swimming, so there's a direct correlation between training and race performance. You get out what you put in.**

It's why pro cyclists train for five or six hours per day and how they cope with three weeks of intense racing during the Tour de France. If professional runners could train for six hours per day, they would. It's why the likes of 5,000m World Champion Mo Farah train on an underwater treadmill, in an attempt to squeeze in more specific aerobic conditioning than their competitors without making their

legs sore. Cycling is a non-weight bearing and non-impact sport, so you can be on the bike for longer without risking excessive fatigue and muscle damage.

Thankfully you don't need to train like a pro cyclist in order to improve. You can still fit your triathlon training around your job, family and anything else you have on your plate. But you do need to make cycling your training focus for at least a month, and be prepared for your swim and run performances to stay static during that time. Sometimes it's better to improve significantly in one discipline than it is to plateau in all three.

So to help transform you into a stronger cyclist there are two four-week plans to choose from – one takes around six hours per week and the other takes 11. Pick whichever one you can cope with best, depending on your experience, fitness and spare time. Both of them are suitable for triathlon distances up to Ironman 70.3. Or you can borrow elements of both plans and use your common sense to construct your own schedule, while making sure you don't give yourself too many consecutive hard days.

Finally make sure you use the Training Zones and Key, so that you do everything right first time around, rather than having to learn from mistakes.

### Post-plan training tips

Once you've completed one of these four-week plans you can either carry on with a similar pattern for another four weeks or revert back to splitting your time more evenly between swimming, cycling and running. As you approach your target races the important thing is to incorporate one or two brick sessions each week (bike into run) so you can run fast on your newly strong cycling legs.

### Are these plans for you?

Before beginning this plan you should already be able to:

- Ride your bike for at least 90 minutes
- Run for at least 30 minutes
- Swim 400 metres non-stop

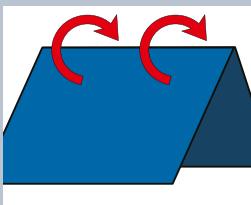


### How it works

Get your guide ready to go



Cut out the guide following the dotted outline



Fold the guide in quarters using the fold guides



Now carry it with you for reference while training

Photos: Russell Burton, Paul Smith





## Beginner/Improver

# BIKE TRAINING

GET BIKE-FIT LEGS AND SEE YOUR FITNESS IMPROVE WITH OUR FOUR-WEEK PLAN

FOLD1

## WEEK 01

Mon

**AM** **Swim 2,400m** Technique session **WU** 2x (150m FC, 100m KICK, 50m PULL) **MAIN** 4x(25m DOG, 25m FC, 25m FISTS, 25m FC, 25m SCULL, 25m FC) +20m RI, 2x(400m N/S +30secs RI) **WD** 400m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** **Run 30mins** **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 6x1min flat-out fast (+1min RI) **WD** 9mins in Z2

Tue

**Bike 50mins** **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 10, 9, 8mins all in Z3 (+2mins RI) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Wed

**Swim 2,000m** Strength session **WU** 300m FC, 100m KICK, 4x50m BUILD (+15secs RI) **MAIN** 200m BAND +20m RI, 300m ANKLES +30secs RI, 400m PULL +40secs RI, 200m FC  
**WD** 200m FC, 100m KICK

Thu

**Run 30mins** **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 15mins in Z3 **WD** 5mins in Z2

Fri

## Rest day

Sat

**Bike 50mins** **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 6x3mins hard in Z4 (+3mins RI in Z1) **WD** 5mins in Z2

Sun

**Bike 1hr 30mins** endurance ride in Z2

Triathlon plus  
YOUR  
4-WEEK  
PLAN

## TRAINING ZONES

**USING THESE** Training Zones will help you train at the right intensity for each session. This helps develop specific aspects of your fitness, as well as making sure you don't overdo it.

You can either estimate your intensity using the Training Zone descriptions, or use a heart-rate monitor for a more precise measure. If you use a heart-rate monitor, use the percentages provided, and subtract them from your maximum heart rate to calculate your zones. Tools like cycle power meters and GPS watches will also help track your training progress, but they're not essential for these plans.

These training zones are only a guide, so don't worry about being overly precise with heart rates because they'll fluctuate anyway. It's good to be mindful of your intensity but it's even more important that you get out there and enjoy your training.

**ZONE 1 [Z1] Recovery**

60 to 65% of your maximum. Easy pace, feels nice and light.

**ZONE 2 [Z2] Steady**

65 to 75% of your maximum. Fairly easy pace. Easy enough so that you could breathe just through your nose if you wanted to.

**ZONE 3 [Z3] Tempo**

75% to 80% of your maximum. A fairly hard, but sustainable pace.

**ZONE 4 [Z4] Race tempo**

80 to 90% of your maximum. A hard pace that requires real focus to sustain.

**KEY** **WU** Warm up, **WD** Warm down, **MAIN** Main set, **FC** Front crawl, **KICK** Kick with a float held out in front of you, **BUILD** Gradually increase the intensity of each rep within a set, **PULL** Front crawl with a pull float between thighs, **RI** Rest interval, **BACK** Backstroke, **BREAST** Breaststroke, **1-ARM** Front crawl using one arm only **N/S** Negative split—swim the 2nd half faster than the first, **FDRAG** Drag your fingers along the surface during the FC arm recovery, **FISTS** Swim FC with clenched fists, **DOG** Doggy paddle, **SCULL** Kick with arms held out in front, sculling your hands side to side, **BAND** Front crawl with a rubber band or inner-tube tied around ankles, **ANKLES** Front crawl with pull float between ankles

## STAY IN THE TRAINING ZONE WITH TRIATHLON PLUS

## WEEK 03

Mon

**AM** **Swim 2,000m** Technique session **WU** 200m FC, 200m PULL, 100m KICK +20secs RI **MAIN** 8x50m as (25m FDRAG, 25m FC) +60secs RI. 1x400min Z3 (+15secs RI), 2x200min in Z3 (+15secs RI) 2x100min Z3 **WD** 10mins easy FC or BACK  
**PM** **Run 30mins** **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 3x2mins flat-out fast (+2mins jog recoveries) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Tue

**Bike 50mins** **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 3, 4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3mins all in Z3 (+1min RI) **WD** 4mins in Z2

Wed

**Swim 2,000m** Strength session **WU** 300m FC, 100m KICK, 4x50m BUILD +15secs RI **MAIN** 4x50m FC in Z4 +15secs RI, 200m PULL in Z2 +20secs RI, 2x50m FC in Z4 +15secs RI, 200m PULL in Z2, 4x50m FC in Z4 +15secs RI **WD** 200m FC, 100m KICK, 200m PULL

Thu

**Run 30mins** **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 10mins in Z3 **WD** 10mins in Z2

Fri

## Rest day

Sat

**Bike 40mins** **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 20mins as (alternating 1min in Z4, 2mins in Z2) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Sun

**Bike 2hrs 30mins** endurance ride in Z2

## WEEK 04

**AM** **Swim 2,000m** Muscular endurance session **WU** 200m FC, 200m KICK, 100m PULL-20secs RI **MAIN** 4x100m 1-ARM, 200m N/S, 4x50m FDRAG, 200m N/S, 4x50m FISTS, 200m N/S **WD** 200m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** **Run 30mins** **WU** 15mins as (10mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 2x3mins flat-out fast (+2mins jog recoveries) **WD** 5mins in Z2

**Bike 45mins** **WU** 15mins as 10mins in Z2, 3mins in Z3, 2mins in Z2 **MAIN** 20mins alternating (30secs max, 30secs recovery spin) **WD** 10mins in Z2

**Swim 2,300m** Strength session **WU** 200m FC, 100m KICK, 200m PULL, 100m FC **MAIN** 400m (alternating 50m FC, 25m KICK), 3x(200m PULL, 100m KICK in Z3) +30secs RI **WD** 400m BACK/BREAST

**Run 30mins** **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 10mins in Z3 **WD** 10mins in Z2

## Rest day

**Bike 45mins** **WU** 15mins as 10mins in Z2, 3mins in Z3, 2mins in Z2 **MAIN** 20mins as (alternating 30secs max, 30secs recovery spin) **WD** 10mins in Z2

**Bike 2hour** endurance ride in Z2





Triathlon  
YOUR  
4-WEEK  
PLAN

Intermediate/advanced

## BIKE TRAINING

RAMP UP YOUR TRAINING INTENSITY WITH THIS FOUR-WEEK CYCLE FITNESS PLAN

FOLD1

### WEEK 01

Mon

Rest day

Tue

**AM** **Swim 2,500m** Technique session  
**WU** 3x300m as (100m FC, 100m KICK, 100m PULL)  
**MAIN** 8x50m as (25m FISTS, 25m FC) 3x (150m FC in Z2, 100m FC in Z3, 50m FC in Z4) +20secs RI  
**WD** 300m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** Bike 50mins **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 10.9, 8mins all in Z3 (+2mins RI) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Wed

Run 45mins **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 8x1min flat-out fast (+2mins jog RI) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Thu

**AM** **Swim 2,500m** Strength session **WU** 300m FC, 100m KICK, 300m PULL, 100m KICK  
**MAIN** 400m ANKLES in Z2 +45secs RI, 100m BAND +15secs RI, 400m PULL +45secs RI, 100m FISTS, 400m FC in Z2, 100m 1-ARM  
**WD** 200m easy FC/BACK  
**PM** Bike 50mins **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 6x3mins hard in Z4 (+3min RI in Z1) **WD** 5mins in Z2

Fri

Run 60mins **WU** 25mins in Z2  
**MAIN** 15mins in Z3 **WD** 20mins in Z2

Sat

Bike 2hour endurance ride in Z2

Bike 2hour endurance ride in Z2

### WEEK 02

Mon

Rest day

Tue

**AM** **Swim 2,500m** Muscular endurance session  
**WU** 100m FC, 100m KICK, 100m FDRAg, 100m PULL, 6x50m KICK **MAIN** 4x100m FC in Z3 +20secs RI, 300m PULL in Z1, 3x100m FC in Z3 +20secs RI, 200m PULL in Z1, 100m FC in Z3  
**WD** 500m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** Bike 50mins **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 3.4, 5, 6, 5, 4, 3mins all in Z3 (+1min RI) **WD** 4mins in Z2

Wed

Run 40mins **WU** 12mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 5x2mins flat-out fast (+2mins jog recoveries) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Thu

**AM** **Swim 2,600m** Strength session **WU** 200m FC, 100m KICK, 200m PULL, 100m KICK **MAIN** 400m as (alternating 50m FC, 25m KICK), 8x50m PULL in Z3 +15secs RI, 2x100m KICK as 50m easy, 50m hard +20secs RI, 300m PULL in Z3, 3x100m ANKLES in Z2 +30secs RI **WD** 400m FC/BACK/  
**BREAST** **PM** Bike 45mins **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 30mins as (alternating 2mins in Z4, 2mins in Z2) **WD** 5mins in Z2

Fri

Run 60mins **WU** 25mins in Z2  
**MAIN** 15mins in Z3 **WD** 20mins in Z2

Sat

Bike 2hr 30mins endurance ride in Z2

Bike 2hr 30mins endurance ride in Z2

## TRAINING ZONES

**USING THESE** Training Zones will help you train at the right intensity for each session. This helps develop specific aspects of your fitness, as well as making sure you don't overdo it.

You can either estimate your intensity using the Training Zone descriptions, or use a heart-rate monitor for a more precise measure. If you use a heart-rate monitor, use the percentages provided and subtract them from your maximum heart rate to calculate your zones. Tools like cycle power meters and GPS watches will also help track your training progress, but they're not essential for these plans.

These training zones are only a guide, so don't worry about being overly precise with heart rates because they'll fluctuate anyway. It's good to be mindful of your intensity but it's even more important that you get out there and enjoy your training.

### ZONE 1 [Z1] Recovery

60 to 65% of your maximum. Easy pace, feels nice and light.

### ZONE 2 [Z2] Steady

65 to 75% of your maximum. Fairly easy pace. Easy enough so that you could breathe just through your nose if you wanted to.

### ZONE 3 [Z3] Tempo

75% to 80% of your maximum. A fairly hard but sustainable pace.

### ZONE 4 [Z4] Race tempo

80 to 90% of your maximum. A hard pace that requires real focus to sustain.

**KEY** **WU** Warm up, **WD** Warm down, **MAIN** Main set, **FC** Front crawl, **KICK** Kick with a float held out in front of you, **BUILD** Gradually increase the intensity of each rep within a set, **PULL** Front crawl with a pull float between thighs, **RI** Rest interval, **BACK** Backstroke, **BREAST** Breaststroke, **1-ARM** Front crawl using one arm only **N/S** Negative split – swim the 2nd half faster than the first, **FDRAg** Drag your fingers along the surface during the FC arm recovery, **FISTS** Swim FC with clenched fists, **DOG** Doggy paddle, **SCULL** Kick with arms held out in front, sculling your hands side to side, **BAND** Front crawl with a rubber band or inner-tube tied around ankles, **ANKLES** Front crawl with pull float between ankles

## STAY IN THE TRAINING ZONE WITH TRIATHLON PLUS

### WEEK 03

Mon

Rest day

Tue

**AM** **Swim 2,900m** Technique session  
**WU** 300m FC, 200m KICK, 200m FC **MAIN** 3x (300m PULL in Z3 +30secs RI, 100m FC in Z2 +20secs RI, 100m FC in Z3 +20secs RI, 100m FC in Z4 +20secs RI) **WD** 400m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** Bike 50mins **WU** 10mins in Z2 **MAIN** 10.9, 8mins all in Z3 (+90secs RI) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Wed

Run 40mins **WU** 15mins as (10mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 4x3mins flat-out fast (+2mins jog recoveries) **WD** 8mins in Z2

Thu

**AM** **Swim 2,500m** Strength session **WU** 2x250m FC, 100m KICK, 200m PULL, 100m KICK **MAIN** 8x(25m SCULL, 25m FC) +10secs RI, 100m PULL in Z4 +10secs RI, 200m FC in Z3 +10secs RI, 300m PULL in Z2 +30secs RI, 200m FC in Z3 +20secs RI, 100m FC in Z4 +20secs RI **WD** 400m BACK/BREAST  
**PM** Bike 45mins **WU** 10mins as (5mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 30mins as (alternating 2mins in Z4, 2mins in Z2) **WD** 5mins in Z2

Fri

Run 60mins **WU** 25mins in Z2  
**MAIN** 15mins in Z3 **WD** 20mins in Z2

Sat

Bike 3 hour endurance ride in Z2

Bike 2hour endurance ride in Z2

### WEEK 04

Mon

Rest day

Tue

**AM** **Swim 2,000m** Technique session  
**WU** 300m FC, 200m KICK, 200m FC, 200m PULL **MAIN** 4x50m 1-ARM, 200m N/S, 4x50m FDRAg, 200m N/S, 4x50m FISTS, 200m N/S **WD** 200m easy FC or BACK  
**PM** Bike 45mins **WU** 15mins as 10mins in Z2, 3mins in Z3, 2mins in Z4 **MAIN** 20mins as alternating (30secs max, 30secs recovery spin) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Wed

Run 30mins **WU** 15mins as (10mins in Z2, 5mins in Z3) **MAIN** 5mins in Z4 **WD** 10mins in Z2

Thu

**AM** **Swim 2,300m** Strength session **WU** 200m FC, 100m KICK, 200m PULL, 100m FC **MAIN** 400m (alternating 50m FC, 25m KICK), 3x (200m FC, 100m KICK in Z2) +30secs RI **WD** 400m BACK/BREAST  
**PM** Bike 45mins **WU** 15mins as 10mins in Z2, 3mins in Z3, 2mins in Z4 **MAIN** 20mins as alternating (30secs max, 30secs recovery spin) **WD** 10mins in Z2

Fri

Run 40mins **WU** 15mins in Z2  
**MAIN** 15mins in Z3 **WD** 10mins in Z2

Sat

Bike 2hour endurance ride in Z2

Bike 2hour endurance ride in Z2

